

ST CATHERINE UNIVERSITY

# Energy Healing:

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scientifically based, it is a viable option

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Persuasive Paper  
MAOL 6300 Strategic Communication

**6/19/2009**

**Energy Healing: scientifically based, it is a viable option.**

*“Since everything is energy,  
it’s only a matter of time before energy theory will be a part of everything  
and energy techniques will be applied to everything.”*

- Gary E. Schwartz

In the United States 1/3 of the adult population look outside of conventional western medicine and utilize a variety of energy healing modalities as a part of their health and wellness regime (Tindle, H.A., Davis, R.B., Phillips, R.S., & Eisenberg, D.M., 2005, p. 42-43). The medical industry, once resistant to alternative methods of healing, now considers these practices as an integral component of health and well being. However, there still remains an apprehension to energy healing.

Reiki, which is a basic energy healing modality, was recently declared “based in superstition and incompatible with Christian faith” by the United States Bishops (Filteau, 2009, p. 1). This is one example of the resistance to energy healing that still persists. Education is the remedy for this misperception.

Individuals who understand and realize the benefits of energy healing must speak out to change the current culture as they did to change the health care industry’s perception. The goal of this paper is to demystify misperceptions and provide a greater understanding of the science and process of energy healing. Information provided here can be used as a means to support freedom to choose non-conventional interventions that may be beneficial to optimizing health and well being.

**What is energy?**

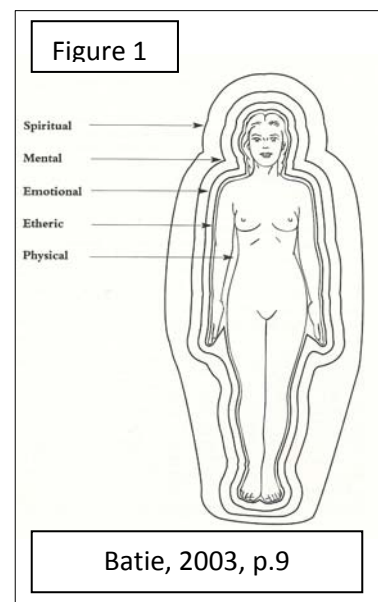
Energy is all around us, from the microcosm to the macrocosm atoms bind together to create various properties; from the individual water molecule, to the human body, to giant skyscrapers, the foundation of energy is the same. The structure of each atom has a nucleus and an

electron shell (“Atom”, 2009). The tiny portion of physical matter that creates the nucleus is a solid structure containing protons and neutrons. The electron shell is a much larger, more open space where electrons move about in orbit. This shell is reactive and responsive to its surrounding environment; changes in the electron shell change the physical structure and properties of the atom. For example adding or removing electrons change the atom into a positively or negatively charged ion (“Atom”, 2009).

The human body has a structure and function similar to the atom. There is a physical anatomical structure as well as the energetic body. Similar to the atom changing the structure in the energetic body of a human can have a positive or negative effect. Within the structure of the energetic body there are 3 main energetic systems: the aura, chakras and meridians. These energetic systems have a structure and function that contribute to the physical, emotional and mental well being of the whole person.

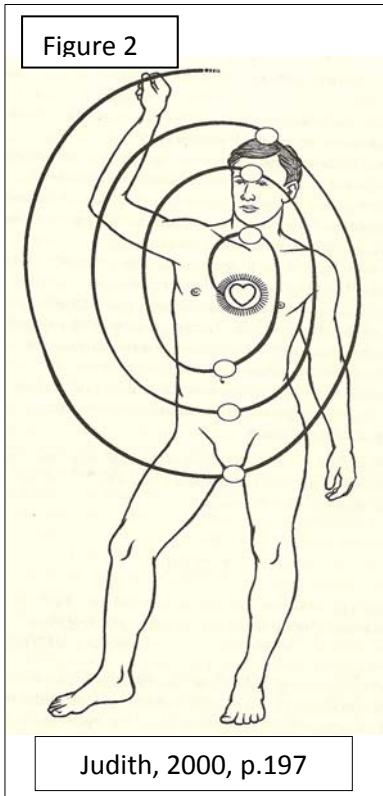
The aura has various layers (Figure 1) that hold the energy and information regarding the spiritual, mental, emotional, etheric and physical layers of the human being (Batie, 2003, p. 6-15).

These layers respond to the internal and external environment to protect and inform the body. These layers also hold memories of past emotional events and can condition our responses to various environmental stimuli. For example, if we experienced burning skin with fire, several imprints may be formed at the time of the burn that can condition our future experiences. A physical scar may form; as the skin regenerates it remembers the event and continues to present the scar. The wisdom of the consequences is held as an imprint in the mental layer and reminds us to be cautious around flames. The pain from the experience may



be held in the emotional layer; if we see someone with scars due to burns it may cause sadness or anxiety. The aura is the most general aspect of the energy systems and is inclusive of all the various aspects of the energy bodies; it holds vital information and the imprints of memories.

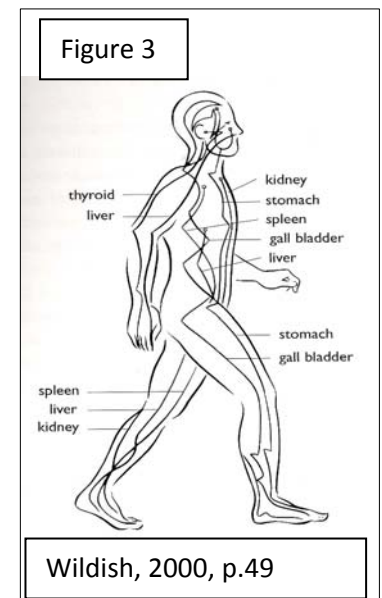
Chakras (Figure 2) are the major energy centers that align with the head and spinal cord, bringing energy into the body (Judith, 2000). These energy centers provide energetic sustenance



that feed the body to maintain optimal physical, mental and emotional health. These energy centers can hold the imprint of specific trauma's related to their unique characteristics. The chakras along the lower torso relate to physical, materialistic values: survival, sexuality and will power. The upper chakras relate to the expression of the self, intuition and connection to a higher spiritual source. The heart chakra is the balancing center between the lower physical and higher spiritual centers. Each chakra is related to the functions of physical organs and endocrine glands. These centers may be healed and balanced through various means e.g. sound, color, energy balancing and removal of the imprint. Chakra healing

is a foundation in many forms of energy healing.

Energy is carried throughout the body by the meridians (Figure 3), which are like rivers of that run through energetic channels in the body (Wildish, 2000, p.24-5). Acupuncturists place needles along the meridians to open blocked energy channels for optimal flow. Energy healers may also detect and move the energy within these channels.



The meridians have a direct link to the energies of the physical organs within the body. If the flow of energy is blocked, the decreased energy supply will diminish the optimal function of the related organ. Meridians provide yet another venue for healing and balancing physiological functions.

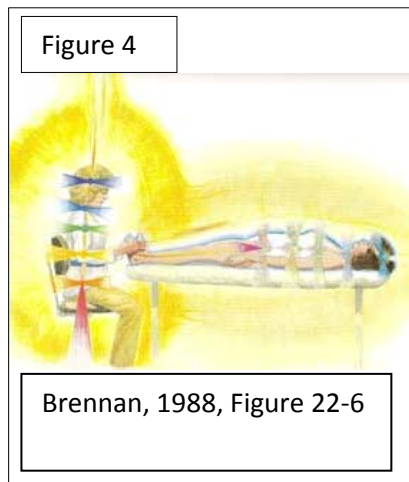
Gary Schwartz breaks down the concept of energy as “the capacity to do work and overcome resistance” (2007, p. 199). He goes on to explain that something with relatively no mass has the power to create everything, including matter. Understanding this scientific concept is the bridge from spiritual based healing phenomenon to science based reality.

### **What is energy healing?**

Energy healing incorporates an intention and utilizes a process to manipulate the energy field to bring balance to the physical, mental and emotional bodies. The energetic anatomy may become unbalanced, blocked or imprinted by highly charged emotional events (Goleman, 1995, pp.13-29); the body then alters its state of free flowing health and well being. Think about a time when you may have become so angry or so sad that you could not think clearly, your body may have tightened up or you may have experienced aching or even stabbing pains; this reaction demonstrates a “resistance” to the experience. When emotions remain unresolved the effects can become imprinted on our energy field, like footprints that show you where you have been, and what remains to be resolved. Whenever a similar situation or emotion is experienced, the body recalls the event of the past and may induce a physical or emotional reaction based on the original traumatic event that caused the imprint (Villoldo, 2000, pp. 55-59). When these blockages accumulate, the body no longer has the capacity to energetically, emotionally, mentally or physically function to its’ full potential. Energy healing removes the imprint, thus overcoming the “resistance”, and increasing the energy available to the body to perform more “work”.

Physical, mental and emotional disruptions or disease can occur from a significant event or from an accumulation of consistent underlying stress. As depicted in the motion picture *Ray* (Benjamin, Baldwin, Baldwin, & Hackford, 2004), Ray Charles witnessed his brother's drowning when he was a young boy; shortly thereafter he developed blindness. He went on to become a very famous musician, yet he never resolved the emotional trauma from seeing his brother die and remained blind. Single events may be reversed by removing and healing the energetic imprint of the event. The body is then allowed to function to its full potential. Continuous exposure or chronic stressors such as being in a high stress job, being in a stressful family situation or being under the pressure of high demands can lead to illnesses such as diabetes, high blood pressure and heart disease. The effects of chronic stress often include: decreased productivity, increased sick time, irritability, fatigue, nervousness or anxiety (Luskin & Pelletier, 2005, p. 54-55). In the case of chronic stress, a routine of energy balancing practices incorporated into one's life, as with proper diet and exercise, can restore, maintain and enhance health and well being and lead to increased productivity or "work".

Energy healers work to remove and restore energies, bringing balance to the energetic structure in and around the body as in figure 4. The basic forms of energy healing are performed



by the practitioner to clear and balance the aura, chakras and meridians. The process of balancing or unblocking energy begins by setting the intention to perform the healing work and sensing where the energies may be blocked. Once a blockage is detected the energy may be removed from the energy fields with intention. To an energy healer, the process to clear these blocks or imprints

in the subtle energy field is as easy as wiping dust off furniture providing the recipient has overcome resistance and is ready and willing to release the imprint. It is a natural way of maintaining health and wellness that has been practiced for thousands of years.

### **A brief history of healing**

Healing has prevailed in every culture with varying approaches over many millennia. Indigenous healers, herbalists and shamans were often looked upon as spiritual conduits, seers and sages; they were and some are still the visionaries and energy balancers that keep villages safe, fed and healthy. The ancient Greeks relied on humoral medicine: a means to balance the ethers of the body (History of Medicine, 2009). More documented forms of ancient healing come from the Chinese culture nearly 5000 years ago (History of Medicine, 2009). Chinese medicine includes a variety of approaches including the manipulation of energy or Chi, acupuncture and herbal medicine. Today, many of the same ancient Chinese techniques are applied in clinics and hospitals worldwide.

Western medicine, founded by Hippocrates during the Roman Empire, became the gold standard through surgical and pharmaceutical interventions (History of Medicine, 2009). As modern medicine gained respect as a biologically and scientifically based approach, the ancient energy healing practices were by and large abandoned, dismissed and even prohibited as some considered its use heresy due to the lack scientific basis. Many ancient methods of healing were completely lost while others were passed down through the few remaining indigenous nations that survived conquests and western civilization. Only recently, are the ancient healing traditions regaining popularity, for science now understands the body is more than a biomechanical structure, it also functions as a multidimensional energy system (Gerber, 2000, pp. 7-13).

In 1999 the National Institute for Health (NIH) sanctioned the National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine (NCCAM) as one of its' twenty seven institutes of health (National Institutes of Health, 2009). The focus of NCCAM is to provide research and education to the medical profession as well as the American public on non-conventional medicine. This institute defines integrative medicine as combining “mainstream medical therapies and CAM [(complementary and alternative medicine)] therapies for which there is some high-quality scientific evidence of safety and effectiveness”. Energy therapy, including Reiki, is listed as one of the 5 Classifications of CAM therapies (National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine, nd).

### **The latest science supporting energy healing**

*“We may therefore regard matter as being constituted by the regions of space in which the [energy] field is extremely intense... There is no place in this new kind of physics both for the field and matter, for the field is the only reality.”*

–Albert Einstein

The human genome project produced much advancement in the understanding and treatments in the medical industry. The project mapped out the gene sequences in human deoxyribonucleic acid (DNA). It identified certain chromosomal anomalies that result in the expression of disease. However, scientists could not understand why twins, with identical DNA, would manifest different disease states; the answer resides in the epigenome. The epigenome was discovered within the last decade; it is a second genome that overrides the physical genome of the DNA. The epigenome instructs the DNA how to function. As explained in the video *Ghost in your genes* (Holt & Patterson, 2008), if the DNA is like the hardware of a computer, the epigenome is like the software that runs it. The scientists are now discovering that the epigenomes are conditioned or imprinted by environmental toxins and circumstances as well as social factors

or events (Szyf, 2008, p. 47). They are also realizing that the imprints on the epigenome are reversible. This concept supports the foundation for the practice of energy healing that has been used for many generations which is to find the source and location of the imprint and removing it through intention.

### **How does energy healing work?**

Dr. Maruso Emoto, an alternative medicine doctor and researcher in Japan, studies energy through water crystals. Dr. Emoto's work is very important to the healing institutions as it provides a more tangible, visible and measurable effect in regards to the intention and manipulation of energy. His research demonstrates that water, from various sources, expresses various characteristics when rapidly frozen to crystallize. The crystals (Figures 5 and 6) from pure, untainted water sources; they are six sided, symmetrical, intricate and beautiful.

Figure 5



Figure 5: Spring water of Saijo Japan (Emoto, nd, p. 38)

Figure 6: Spring water of Sanbuichi Yusui Japan (Emoto, nd, p. 35)

Figure 6



Water samples from polluted sources were also observed, an example shown in figure 7. Dr. Emoto took his crystal experiments to another level; he evaluated the effects of prayer on the water (Figure 8).

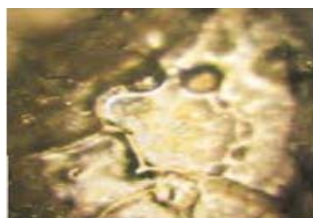


Figure 7: This water sample was taken from the Fugiwara Dam, a polluted source of water in Japan. Its crystal has no symmetry, no structure and may be considered rather ugly. (Emoto, nd, p. 135)



Figure 8: This crystal was taken from the same water source at the Fugiwara Dam after Reverend Kato prayed (an intention to move the energy) for one-hour for the water. The image shows it has been restored back to beauty. (Emoto, nd, p. 137)

Dr Emoto furthered his experiments by using intention. Starting with distilled water as a control, he labeled vials containing distilled water with various words as intentions and observed the resulting crystalline structure shown in figures 9-11. Beautiful intentions or words create beautiful crystals, negative words and intentions create distortions in the structure.



Figure 9: This water vial was labeled with the Japanese word for “Thank You”. (Emoto, nd, p. 91)



Figure 10: This water vial was labeled with the Japanese words for “You make me sick. I will kill you”. (Emoto, nd, p. 94)

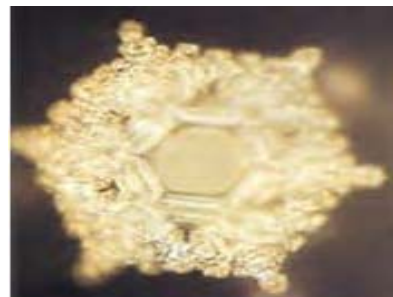


Figure 11: This water vial was labeled with the Japanese words for “Love and Appreciation”. (Emoto, nd, p. 96)

Since our bodies are made of approximately 60% water by weight (Anthony & Thibodeau, 1983, p. 672) it is not surprising that this phenomenon exists in the human body as well. As a healing practitioner, I can personally attest that emotional trauma creates an expression of energy such as depicted in Figures 7 and 10 which blocks the bodies normal function; with the intention to move the blocked energy, beautiful energy is restored such as depicted in Figures 8, 9 or 11. When transformational healing occurs, the conditioning from the imprint of emotional trauma is also alleviated. I have witnessed countless recipients of energy healing who claim to feel lighter, think clearer and have more energy to concentrate, become

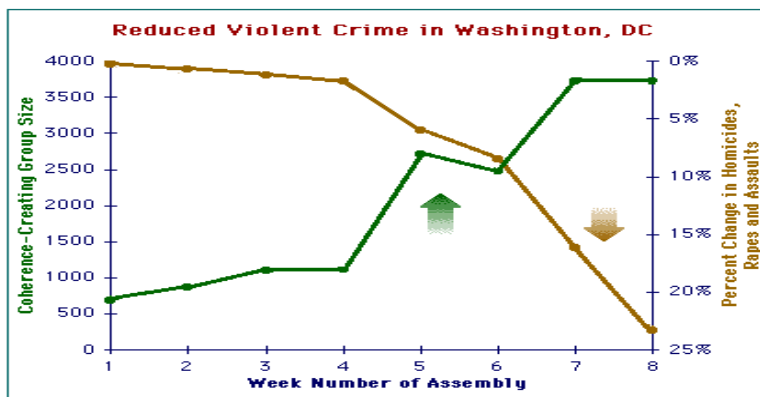
more active and feel more positive in attitude. It is also not unusual to reverse the physical effects caused by disease through energy healing.

### Does Energy Healing work?

There are 2 “systematic reviews” in medical research reveal evidence supporting positive outcomes with the use of various energy healing modalities. Both reviews include randomized controlled trials, which is the highest standard in medical research. The first studies included Healing Touch, Touch Therapy and Reiki modalities of energy healing (So, Jiang, & Qin, 2008) This study demonstrated an improvement in pain management in adults and a decreased need for pain medications. The second review included 4 randomized controlled trials regarding the use of Therapeutic Touch in wound healing (O’Mathúna, & Ashford, 2003). Wound healing in 2 of the 4 trials showed significant improvement with the use of Therapeutic Touch; the other 2 trials were not statistically significant. The existing evidence is favorable, though, clearly more research needs to be done.

One profoundly statistically significant study was conducted by Hagelin, Rainforth, Orme-Johnson, Cavanaugh, Alexander, et.al. (1999). This study applied energy healing to a greater community. This study was conducted by bringing together people who participated in Transcendental Meditation, an intensely focused form of prayer, with the intent to reduce crimes

Figure 12



in Washington DC during the summer of 1993, when these crimes were typically in their peak season. Figure 12 demonstrates as the

number of people participating (green line) increased to nearly 4000 people, there was a coinciding decrease in the number of homicides, rapes and assault crimes reported (tan line) of almost 25%. This study demonstrated a  $p < .000000002$ , meaning the statistical probability of achieving these results by chance was 2 in 1 billion (Hagelin et al, 1999 pp. 173-174). In over twenty years in medical research, I have never seen a more statistically significant study.

### **Ethical perspectives**

Our recent history in the medical industry proves we can overcome resistance to this ancient yet new age method of maintaining health and wellbeing. Once thought of as “snake oil”, the medical community now considers healing practices as integrative medicine: healing modalities are integrated with and viewed equally important as medical treatments. “Integrative medicine has become the fastest growing sector in American health care.” (Luskin, & Pelletier, 2005, Foreword p. x)

The ethics of honesty and the pursuit of excellence must be considered to make objective judgments regarding ancient and new age healing practices. The National Institutes of Health took the right approach: to study and education people on its safety and efficacy. Energy healing now proves to be a viable, often reproducible and effective intervention for many physical and emotional disorders. Prior to our current documentation and scientific support, energy healing had very little scientific foundation; faith was used to explain the miraculous outcomes of healing work. Skepticism was understood and honored; however, we rely only on faith no more. If we dare not explore the truth of energy healing as a viable option for maintaining health and well-being, we may be condemning people to needless illness and suffering. If the characteristics of honesty and objectivity are considered, we can no longer dismiss energy healing as an immoral intervention.

### **What can we do as individuals?**

- Promote accurate information vs. skepticism and doubt. Seek out information on various healing techniques through the internet or talk to reputable healing practitioners.
- Experience healing for yourself - power to the people. The medical industry only took note when patients insisted that alternative methods of healing were effective. Energy healing will gain acceptance through its consumers. Explore the vast options until you find the right modality and the right practitioner that feels right and works for you.
- Tell your physicians, and religious leaders of your experiences with energy healing. The more leaders know about what is happening in people's day-to-day lives, the more attention, support for further research and eventually cultural acceptance will come.
- Suggest energy healing as an option to family members, friends and colleagues that are suffering from ill health or a lack of wellbeing. Unlike many medical interventions, there are no harmful side effects from the use of energy healing.

### **Conclusion**

There is a great potential to live with less pain and suffering. If we apply Gary Schwartz's definition energy, we must overcome resistance to energy healing and get to work! We must continue to seek and support solutions that will provide the greatest value in maintaining optimal health and well being. Today, energy healing stands as a viable option. To end resistance, we must each take on the ethical responsibility to pursue knowledge and wisdom to fully understand our options in maintaining health and wellbeing. Our efforts will result in greater vitality for all!

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